# Luke K

## Links

#### Academic Environmental education is effectively education in managing and administering “green” governmentality

Luke 96’ (“Generating Green Governmentality: A Cultural Critique of Environmental Studies as a Power/Knowledge Formation”, Timothy W. Luke Department of Political Science Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Blacksburg, VA)

There are scores of academic programs across the United States that now purport to offer this kind of comprehensive scientific instruction in environmental studies. This brief analysis cannot survey all of them in order to determine what the general foci of their curricula are or how each specific program varies in its substantive concerns. Instead it selects four well known and highly regarded programs--two at elite private universities, two at respectable public institutions--from around the nation--one in the Pacific region at the University of California-Berkeley, one in the Mountain States at Colorado State University, one in the Northeast at Yale University, and one in the South at Duke University. These programs provide highly suggestive examples of how the discourses and practices of contemporary university training reimagine Nature as "the environment" in their graduate courses of study and professional codes of self-interpretation. While analyses of other American universities might yield additional insights, these institutions represent many of the most crucial disciplinary tendencies in mainstream academic environmental discourses today. Most importantly, this investigation suggests university training discourses comprehensively reframe "the environment" as a highly complex domain far beyond the full comprehension of ordinary citizens or traditional naturalists: it instead becomes something to be managed by expert managerialists armed with coherent clusters of technical acumen and administrative practice.7 Reading through the self-representation of environmental studies at these colleges of natural resources or schools of the environment in the United States, one sees this ideology at work as deans, directors and department heads promise to prepare prospective students to master the ins-and-outs of resource managerialism, risk assessment, and/or recreationist management. Resources, risks, and recreationists become "the three Rs" of higher education in contemporary environmental studies, giving students and faculty specific new foci for their knowledge and granting specialized managerial power by administering this green governmentality in their mostly technocratic professional activities.

#### Members of the state, academia or powerful business, control and direct perceptions of the “environment” by claiming to be objective or impartial

Luke 96’ (“Generating Green Governmentality: A Cultural Critique of Environmental Studies as a Power/Knowledge Formation”, Timothy W. Luke Department of Political Science Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Blacksburg, VA)

This polymorphous combination of anonymous scientific environmental knowledge and organized market and/or state power is disclosed most baldly by the stated purposes of Berkeley's Environmental Science, Policy and Management faculty in the Division of Resource Institutions, Policy, and Management. That is, schools of the environment or colleges of natural resources are engaged quite concretely in "how current and historical configurations of social, economic, and political institutions, as well as cultural values lead to different environmental outcomes and consequences for the composition, level, and distribution of social well-being" inasmuch as their students, teachers and administrators "study and contribute to the formation of natural resource policy, the administration and management of natural resources institutions, and issues of territory, property, and sovereignty at different temporal, spatial, and institutional scales."10 As Berkeley's mission statement indicates, the channels of authority flowing within transnational corporate enterprise or modern nation-states have not carried many ideas, for example, from biocentric deep ecology into more widespread practice in either official American environmental policies or established academic teachings. Notions associated with anthropocentric shallow ecologies, however, have fused more coherently and cohesively in the power effects of such social formations. Their power, as Foucault indicates, "traverses and produces things....It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than a negative instance whose function is repression."11 Schools of environmental studies and colleges of natural resources now provide one of the vital intellectual networks in which the relations of this productive power shape the categories of knowledge. In accord with the prevailing regimes of truth in instrumentalist technoscience, academic centers of environmental studies reproduce those bodies of practice and types of discourse, which the top executive personnel now managing most of the contemporary American state and social institutions, regard as "objective," "valid," or "useful." From the concepts and categories embedded in mission-defining languages and practice-determining beliefs used by schools of the environment or colleges of natural resources, one can get a feel for the raw understandings of "environments" and "natural resources" shared by many environmental professionals in government, business and academe. By reconsidering how these academic institutions and their graduates discursively construct "the environment," as Foucault suggests, one can attempt "to define the way in which individuals or groups represent words to themselves, utilize their forms and meanings, compose real discourse, reveal and conceal in it what they are thinking or saying, perhaps unknown to themselves, more or less than they 6 wish, but in any case leave a mass of verbal traces of those thoughts, which must be deciphered and restored as far as possible to their representative vivacity."12 At the conjunction of life, labor, and language in discourses of environmental studies, one finds an analytic of power/knowledge "which shows how man, in his being, can be concerned with the things he knows, and know the things that, in positivity, determine his mode of being"13 in highly focalized academic constructions of "the environment." The environment, if one follows Foucault's lines of reasoning, must not be understood either as the naturally given sphere of all ecological processes that human power keeps under control or as a mysterious domain of obscure terrestrial events which human knowledge works to explain. Instead, it emerges as a historical artifact that is largely constructed by technoscientific interventions, because it cannot remain an occluded reality that is difficult to comprehend. In this great network of technical interventions into Nature, the simulation of spaces, the intensification of resources, the incitement of discoveries, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls, and the provocation of resistances all can be linked to one another as "the empiricities" of academic,environmental studies.

#### Enviromentality is Foucault’s governmentaility, and attempts to manage resources in the name of the environment, is an effort to control the world’s population

Luke 96’ (“Generating Green Governmentality: A Cultural Critique of Environmental Studies as a Power/Knowledge Formation”, Timothy W. Luke Department of Political Science Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Blacksburg, VA)

Resource managerialism can be read as a geo-power/eco-knowledge of modern governmentality. While voices in favor of conservation can be found in Europe early in the nineteenth century, the real establishment of this stance comes in the United States with the Second Industrial Revolution from the 1880s through the 1920s and the closing of the Western Frontier in the 1890s.17 Whether one looks at John Muir's preservationist programs or Gifford Pinchot's conservationist codes, an awareness of modern industry's power to deplete natural resources, and hence the need for systems of conserving their exploitation, is well-established by the early 1900s. Over the past nine decades, the fundamental premises of resource managerialism have not changed significantly. At best, this code of eco-knowledge only has become more formalized in bureaucratic applications and legal interpretations. Keying off of the managerial logic of the Second Industrial Revolution, which empowered technical experts, or engineers and scientists, on the shop floor and professional managers, or corporate executives and financial officers, in the main office, resource managerialism imposes corporate administrative frameworks upon Nature in order to supply the economy and provision society through centralized state guidance. These frameworks assume that the national economy, like the interacting capitalist firm and household, must avoid both overproduction (excessive resource use coupled with inadequate demand) and underproduction (inefficient resource use coming with excessive demand) on the supply-side as well as overconsumption (excessive resource exploitation coming with excessive demand) and underconsumption (inefficient resource exploitation coupled with inadequate demand) on the demand side. To even construct the managerial problem in this fashion, Nature is reduced--through the encirclement of space and matter by national as well as global economies--to a system of geo-power systems that can be dismantled, redesigned, and assembled anew on demand to produce "resources" efficiently and when and where needed in the modern marketplace. As a cybernetic system of biophysical systems, Nature's energies, materials, and sites are redefined by the eco-knowledges of resource managerialism as manageable resources for human beings to realize great material "goods" for sizeable numbers of some people, even though greater material and immaterial "bads" also might be inflicted upon even larger numbers of other people, who do not reside in or benefit from the advanced national economies that basically monopolize the use of world resources at a comparative handful of highly developed regional and municipal sites. Echoing California-Berkeley's declaration that environmental 8 studies boil down to mobilizing the biological, physical and social sciences to address the major social and political effects of current and future anthropogenic environmental problems, Yale's Dean Cohon tells would-be environmental studies enrollees that their professional power/knowledge will be crucially significant in the coming years: "Your role in helping to protect and manage the integrity and survival of natural systems and human health globally could not be more important. Since so much is now in human hands, people are needed, more than ever, who are focused, informed, and dedicated to learning."18 Here, environmental sciences infrastructuralize the Earth's ecologies. The Earth becomes, if only in terms of technoscience's operational assumptions, an immense terrestrial infrastructure. As the human race's "ecological life-support system," it has "with only occasional localized failures" provided "services upon which human society depends consistently and without charge."19 As the environmentalized infrastructure of technoscientific production, the Earth generates "ecosystem services," or those derivative products and functions of natural systems that human societies perceive as valuable.20 This complex system of systems is what must survive; human life will continue only if such survival-sustaining services continue. And, as Colorado State's, Yale's, Berkeley's or Duke's various graduate programs all record, these infrastructural outputs include: the generation of soils, the regeneration of plant nutrients, capture of solar energy, conversion of solar energy into biomass, accumulation/purification/distribution of water, control of pests, provision of a genetic library, maintenance of breathable air, control of micro and macro climates, pollination of plants, diversification of animal species, development of buffering mechanisms in catastrophes, and aesthetic enrichment.21 Because it is the terrestrial infrastructure of transnational enterprise, the planet's ecology requires highly disciplined reengineering to guide its sustainable use. In turn, the academic systems of green governmentality will monitor, massage, and manage those systems which produce all of these robust services. Just as the sustained use of any technology "requires that it be maintained, updated and changed periodically," so too does the "sustainable use of the planet require that we not destroy our ecological capital, such as old-growth forests, streams and rivers (with their associated biota), and other natural amenities."22 This infrastructuralization of the environment can be illustrated in Colorado State's Forest Science recruitment brochure, which casts its knowledge as being dedicated to "Valuing our Forests and Natural Resources" both inside the classroom and outside in the mountains. To imagine what 9 forests are and do, the Department of Forest Science asks: Have you ever stopped to think how the health of our forests affects your own life? Without forests, there would be no wood for homes or fiber for countless paper products we use every day. Forests also help maintain watersheds and keep our air free of harmful pollutants. And, for centuries, forests have been a very special place where people go to see and enjoy nature. Whether you live in a city or small town, forests impact your life in many ways.23 Forests are represented as open infrastructural networks, or quasi-subjective agencies whose health, growth, and location are quasi-objective structures needed by human beings as building materials, watershed maintenance mechanisms, air cleaners, or human enjoyment zones. Moreover, the environmental infrastructure of our forests "need people who can understand and manage them" but, as Colorado State claims, "only with well-educated professionals can we ensure that our resources will be available for the benefit of present and future generations."24 So to rightly manage this vital green infrastructure it provides four concentrations of discursive understanding and applied practice--forest biology, forest fire science, forest management, and forest-business--to prepare environmental professionals. Learning about forests "from actual experience, not just from textbooks," Forest Science pledges comprehensive training as forest biology focuses "on the biology of trees and the ecology of forest;" forest fire science examines "fire as a forest management tool" as students "learn how prescribed fire can be used to enhance wildlife habitat, prepare seedbeds, control forest insects and disease, and reduce fuel hazards;" forest management concentrates on how state and commercial agencies exploit "forest productivity, economics, and conservation, along with the latest in computerbased management tools;" and, forest-business teaches business applications "if you seek employment with a private timber company, or you wish to develop your own forest business."25 Colorado State's Forest Science Program, therefore, promises to open doors to professional-technical jobs that oversee the technoscientific nexus of discipline/sovereignty/territoriality in managing forest resources as students either are able "to qualify as a professional forester and work with traditional national and international resource organizations" or find avenues that "pursue employment in fields such as land use planning, youth agency administration, natural resource communications, mining reclamation, business, law enforcement, or conservation biology."26 Indeed, forest science is a system of discursive truth production by which environmental professionals "learn to manage forests for maximum growth; to protect forests from fires and disease; and to conserve forest, soil, and water resources," because such 10 knowing mediations of power do provide "a truly unique and rewarding opportunity"27 to exercise their professional-technical power/knowledge ecologically.

#### Efforts to protect or enhance the environment are attempts to mold and control the earth, forever preventing the earth from “existing” or evolving

Luke 96’ (“Generating Green Governmentality: A Cultural Critique of Environmental Studies as a Power/Knowledge Formation”, Timothy W. Luke Department of Political Science Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Blacksburg, VA)

The "three Rs" of environmental studies now implicitly acknowledge how thoroughly most human ecologies on Earth are "a sociotechnical order." As Law suggests, the networks of humans and machines, animals and plants, economies and ecologies, which now constitute our environment, are mixed media of power and knowledge: "what appears to be social is partly technical. What we usually call technical is partly social. In practice nothing is purely technical. Neither is anything purely social."54 Approaching the environment as terrestrial infrastructure, at the same time, admits that the professionaltechnical graduates of environmental studies programs are in many ways trained to operate as "heterogeneous engineers." That is, he/she must work "not only on inanimate physical materials, but on and through people, texts, devices, city councils, architectures, economics, and all the rest," such that if his/her designs are to work as a system, then he/she always must travel effectively "between these different domains, weaving an emergent web which constituted and reconstituted bits and pieces that it brought together."55 Too few articulations of environmental studies acknowledge these basic operational conditions, but they form the sociotechnical terrains upon which environmental studies experts must negotiate their professional worklives 16 through in order to heterogeneously engineer Earth's ecologies as the infrastructures of anthropogenic environments. Transforming the raw stuff of Nature into natural resources, while minimizing the associated risks of such processing and maximizing the aggregate access of recreationists to yet-to-be or never-to-be transformed Nature, is a constant challenge for heterogeneous engineers from the environmental science disciplines to pull off with any aplomb. The green fixations of so many conventional environmentalists makes it difficult, if not impossible, for environmental studies to recognize all of the natural/artificial networks that its practitioners must tend as essential parts with a complex system for their projects of heterogeneous engineering. Owning up to full immensity of these tasks, however, leads those who would be the tenders of Nature to the project of "terraforming," or reshaping the Earth so completely that it obviously becomes an essentially sociotechnical planetary order. The Earth, then, no longer is allowed to exist or evolve as such; instead it is consigned to the hands of terraforming professionals with graduate training in the environmental sciences. Duke University asserts "the mission of the School of the Environment is education, research and service to understand basic environmental processes and to protect and enhance the environment and its natural resources for future generations."56 This engagement at "protecting" and "enhancing" the environment to transmit its natural resources to future generations is seconded by California-Berkeley, whose Ecosystem Sciences mission statement virtually writes the job description of terraforming technicians: "Ecosystem Sciences are concerned with quantitative understanding of ecosystem properties and processes, and the controls on these features. Central to this mission is a full partnership between physical and biological scientists, leading to an integrated understanding of ecosystem structure and function, and the extension of these findings in modeling and implementation activities."57 The labor of environmental studies professionals must be dedicated to protecting and enhancing the performativity of our environments. Whatever surrounds our increasing performative global economy must also become as operationally adaptable, flexible, and productive, as Colorado State labels them, through the problem-solving knowledges of riparian management, land rehabilitation, habitat evaluation, range economics, biotelemetric surveillance, wood engineering, resource interpretation, or visitor strategies. While students may enter schools of environmental studies and colleges of natural resources in search of wisdom from Aldo Leopold or John Muir, they mostly leave as adept practitioners of ecosystem management/analysis, ecological risk analysis, and recreation resource 17 administration.58 Forests, range lands, waters, game animals, and soils all are integral components in terrestrial infrastructures for the vast machineries of commodity production, circulation, consumption, and accumulation, which are, in turn, terraforming the unruly ecologies of Earth to suit their mainly commercial requirements. Because, as the Dean of Yale's School argues, "there is hardly a place on Earth where human activity does not influence the environment's current condition or its prospects for the future," environmental studies and colleges of natural resources produce technoscientific experts, or those new "cadres of educated professionals," or who truly believe "that the best hope for developing sound knowledge and workable management solution for environmental problems is to bring science and policy together."59 Truths about ecology are not objective timeless verities, but rather are the operationalized findings of continuously evolving practices for heterogeneous engineering as they have been constructed by major research universities. These institutions are sites where "truth," or "a system of order procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements,"60 arises from knowledge formations, like the disciplines of environmental science, to help steer power formations, like the decision-making bureaux of liberal democratic states and capitalist firms. As Foucault asserts, "there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterize and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association."61 Environmental science, then, should reveal multiple traces of this vital cycle of cogeneration by which power charges truthful knowledges even as truthful knowledges mediate power in the scope and substance of its discursive construction at schools of environmental studies and colleges of natural resources.

#### The heterogeneous engineers behind fast capitalism's environmentalizing regime must advance eco-knowledges to activate their command over geo-power as well as operationalize a measure of operational discipline over environmental resources, risks, and recreationists in their reconstruction of contemporary governmentality as environmentality.

Luke 96’ (“Generating Green Governmentality: A Cultural Critique of Environmental Studies as a Power/Knowledge Formation”, Timothy W. Luke Department of Political Science Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Blacksburg, VA)

This investigation's approach to some specific environmental discourses circulating through modern research universities may offend some in the academy because it asks how involved, and in what ways have academicians become implicated, in causing the current ecological crisis, even though they might believe themselves to be ameliorating it. The cultural politics of environmental discourse, however, can be studied most effectively by following the actors back to their sites of professional-technical training at schools of environmental studies or colleges of natural resources. This is where the 18 heterogeneous engineering cultures of mainstream environmentalists--or conventional understandings manifest in the acts and artifacts of these social groups--are both produced and reproduced. As this discussion illustrates, here is where one can discover how and why environmental studies are shaped by its disciplines of heterogeneous engineering as every environmental professional gets his or her education to protect and manage the Earth. A few may be engaged, on the one hand, by dreams of preservationist restoration ecology, but most others are devoted, on the other hand, to vast projects of conservationist eco-rationalization in which Nature's forests, lands, and waters technocratically are to be reengineered as vast terrestrial infrastructures for resource/risk/recreationist managers to administer.62 There are limitations to this analytical approach. On one level, it cannot delve beneath the manifest intentions of such schools and colleges as they portray themselves in their own literature. One must assume that they are what they profess to be, and actually do what their documents promise. On a second level, it cannot catch any resistances or all deviations from the official institutional line, which clearly are always afoot in any academic institution. Many courses carry bland descriptions of totally conformist approaches, but their instructors and students may very well follow none of them when their classes actually convene. And, on a third level, it does not consider how state or corporate power centers, in the last analysis, often will ignore or belittle academic knowledge, because its guidance contradicts what their organizational powers can, or will, in fact, do against all informed advice to act otherwise. So well-trained professionals, even when armed with sound science, can be flouted to serve the expedient goals of far more naked power agendas. Nonetheless, even this very tentative survey of the professional-technical practices fostered at schools of environmental studies discloses a great deal about how technoscience discourses frame regimes of discipline in the everyday workings of governmentality. Power and knowledge are pervasive forces whose agents often move in quite different channels sometimes tied to interlocked, but at other times not thoroughly networked, social structures. Universities provide an unusual opportunity to view them working more in unison and out in the open as the formal knowledges needed by power centers are imparted to new generations in the ruling, owing, knowing, or controlling elites; and, at the same time, those specific power agendas required to define, implement or reproduce knowledges and their truth systems quickly get adopted through university programs of study and research. Therefore, this analysis has only begun the examination of discursive frames and conceptual definitions for common theoretical notions, like "the environment," "environmental studies," or 19 "environmental sciences." Nonetheless, contemporary American universities are giving Nature a new look as "the environment" by transforming their formal knowledges about its workings into the professional-technical practices of a managerialistic "environmentality" in their schools of the environment or colleges of natural resources. The heterogeneous engineers behind fast capitalism's environmentalizing regime must advance eco-knowledges to activate their command over geo-power as well as operationalize a measure of operational discipline over environmental resources, risks, and recreationists in their reconstruction of contemporary governmentality as environmentality. Like governmentality, the disciplinary articulations of environmentality now center upon establishing and enforcing "the right disposition of things" by policing humanity's "conduct of conduct" in Nature and Society. Nature loses any transcendent aura, however, as its stuff appears preprocessed in the academy as mere "environments" full of exploitable, but also protectable, "natural resources" that university faculty and post-graduate students study continuously in order to rationalize how particular research-oriented and management-oriented applied sciences can get down to the business of administering their geo-power processes as terrestrial fast capitalism's "natural resource systems."

#### Control of the environment is Foucault’s govern mentality in the most extreme form, efforts to control the environment and green goods, are efforts to control humanity

Luke 98’ (“The (Un)Wise (Ab)Use of Nature: Environmentalism as Globalized Consumerism,” Timothy W. Luke Department of Political Science Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Blacksburg, VA)

The actions of the Worldwatch Institute, the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Sierra Club are frameworks within which a new habitus with its own environmentalized relations of pro- duction and consumption has come alive by guarding habitat as con- sumer goods. As Baudrillard observes, "The great signified, the great referent Nature is dead, replaced by environment, which simultane- ously designates and designs its death and the restoration of nature as simulation model. . . . We enter a social environment of synthesis in which a total abstract communication and an immanent manipu- lation no longer leave any point exterior to the system."89 Rendering air, water, biodiversity, habitat, and nature into complex new systems of rare goods in the name of environmental protection, and then regulating the social consumption of them through ecological ac- tivism, shows how mainstream environmentalists can serve as agents of social control in the global economy by reimagining the in- tractable equations of (un) wise (ab) use along consummational rather than consumptive lines. Putting Earth first establishes ecological capital as the ultimate basis of life. Infrastructuralizing nature renders everything on Earth, or "humanity's home," into capital - land, labor, animals, plants, air, water, genes, ecosystems - allowing mainstream environmentalism to operate as a very special kind of "home economics" to manage hu- manity's indoors and outdoors household accounts. Household con- sumption ironically is always home consumption, because human economics rests upon terrestrial ecologies. The roots of ecology and economics intertwine in sustainability and development, revealing their double significance. Sustainably managing the planet is the¶ 206 The (Un)Wise (Ab)Use of Nature same thing as reproducing terrestrial stocks of infrastructorialized green capital. Whether or not environmentalists prevent the unwise abuse or promote wise use of natural resources is immaterial; every- thing they do optimizes the sign value of green goods and revalorizes global capital as environmentalized sites, stocks, and spaces - an out- come that every Worldwatch Institute State of the World report or Sierra Club ecotour confirms. Likewise, the scarcity measures of Na- ture Conservancy or World Wildlife Fund scare campaigns under- score how everything now has a price, including wildlife preservation or ecological degradation, which global markets will mark and meet in their (un) wise (ab) use of environmentalized resources. Foucault's views on governmentality fit these activities. State power is not "an entity which was developed above individuals, ig- noring what they are and even their very existence," because its power/knowledge has indeed evolved "as a very sophisticated struc- ture, in which individuals can be integrated, under one condition: that this individuality would be shaped in a new form, and submitted to a set of very specific patterns."90 Producing discourses of ecologi- cal living, articulating designs of sustainable development, and prop- agating definitions of environmental literacy for contemporary indi- viduals simply adds new twists to the "very specific patterns" by which the state formation constitutes "a modern matrix of individualiza- tion"91 out of environmental justice. The emergent regime of green biopower, in turn, operates through ethical systems of identity as much as it does the policy directives of governmental bureaus within any discretely bordered territory. Ecology resonates with effects from "one of the great innovations in the techniques of power in the eigh- teenth century"; namely, "the emergence of 'population' as an eco- nomic and political problem."92 Once demography emerges as a science of statist administration, its statistical attitudes diffuse into the quantitative surveillance of na- ture, or Earth environments and their nonhuman inhabitants, as well as the study of culture, or society and its human members. In ecogra- phies written by worldwatchers, technoscientific experts can steer effects exerted from their astropanopticons through nature conser- vancies, wildlife funds, and sierra clubs.93 Government, in the medi- ations of superpowered statist ecology, preoccupies itself with "the conduct of conduct," particularly in contemporary consumerism's "buying of buying" or "purchasing of purchasing." Habitus is habitat, as any good product semanticist or psychodemographer knows all too well. Environments - both the yet-to-be-built in "nature" or the already-built in "society" - are spaces under police supervision, expert management, risk avoidance, or technocratic control.94 The ethical¶concerns of family, community, and nation continue to guide how conduct is to be conducted; yet, at this juncture, the activities of the Worldwatch Institute, the Nature Conservancy, the World Wildlife Fund, and the Sierra Club show how "the environment" increasingly serves as another decisive ground for normalizing each individual's behavior through consumerism. Habitus is habitat, but habitat also defines, delimits, and directs habitus. Conservationist ethics, re- source managerialism, and green rhetorics congeal as an unusually cohesive power/knowledge formation, whose (un) wise (ab) use op- erates smoothly within this new order of social normalization.

#### Enviormentalism is an effort to control the population by controlling resources, it is “governmentality”

Luke 98’ (“The (Un)Wise (Ab)Use of Nature: Environmentalism as Globalized Consumerism,” Timothy W. Luke Department of Political Science Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University Blacksburg, VA)

A political incitement to talk about ecology, environments, and na- ture first surfaced as the social project of "environmentalism" during¶ However, it plainly has become far more pronounced in the 1990s, as environmental discursive practices steer toward analysis, stocktaking, and classification in their quantita- tive, causal, and humanistic studies of planet Earth. Clearly, environmentalism is becoming a mode of governmentality, and one can follow Foucault by exploring how mainstream environmentalism in the United States operates as "a whole series of different tactics that com- bined in varying proportions the objective of disciplining the body and that of regulating populations."3 The project of "sustainability," whether one speaks of sustainable development, growth, or use for the economy in relation to Earth's ecologies, embodies this new re- sponsibility for the life processes in the rational harmonization of po- litical economy with global ecology as a form of green geopolitics. These connections become more intriguing in the aftermath of the Cold War. Having won the long, twilight struggle against Com- munist totalitarianism, the United States is governed by leaders who see "Earth in the balance," arguing that global ecologies incarnate what is best and worst in the human spirit. On the one hand, econo- mists, industrialists, and political leaders increasingly represent the strategic terrain of the post-1991 world system in geoeconomic terms, arguing all nations must compete ruthlessly to control the fu- ture development of the world economy by developing new tech- nologies, dominating more markets, and exploiting every national economic asset. On the other hand, however, the phenomenon of "failed states," ranging from basket cases like Rwanda, Somalia, or Angola to crippled entities like Ukraine, Afghanistan, or Kazakhstan, often are blamed upon the severe environmental crises associated with ineffective strategies for creating economic growth.4 Conse- quently, environmental protection issues - ranging from resource conservation to sustainable development to ecosystem restoration - are getting greater consideration as geopolitical tactics in the name of creating jobs, maintaining growth, or advancing technological de- velopment. Taking "ecology" into account, then, leads to discourses on "the environment" that derive not only from morality, but also from rationality. As humanity has faced "the limits of growth" and heard "the population bomb" ticking away, ecologies and environ- ments have become something more than what societies must judge morally; they became forces that states must administer rationally in projects of ecological modernization. Ecology has evolved into "a public potential; it called for management procedures; it had to be taken charge of by analytical discourses," as it was recognized in its environmentalized manifestations to be "a police matter" in which governments seek "not the repression of disorder, but an ordered maximization of collective and individual forces."5¶ 178 The (Un)Wise (Ab)Use of Nature Discourses of "geoeconomics," as they have been expounded by voices as diverse as Robert Reich, Lester Thurow, and Edward Luttwak, as well as rearticulations of "geopolitics" in an ecological register, as they are developed by President Bill Clinton or Vice Pres- ident Al Gore, both outline new understandings of the earth's eco- nomic and political assets as zones for the orderly maximization of material resources.6 Geoeconomics often transforms through mili- tary metaphors and strategic analogies what hitherto were regarded as purely economic concerns into national security issues of wise use of resources and sovereign property rights. Government manipula- tion of trade policy, state support of major corporations, and public aid for retraining labor all become vital instruments for "the contin- uation of the ancient rivalry of the nations by new industrial means."7 The relative success or failure of national economies in head-to-head global competitions typically are taken by geoeconom- ics as the definitive register of any one nation-state's waxing or wan- ing international power, as well as its rising or falling industrial com- petitiveness, technological vitality, and economic prowess. In this context, many believe ecological considerations can be ignored, or given at best only meaningless symbolic responses, in the quest to mobilize as many of the Earth's material resources as possible as pri- vate property. This hard-nosed response is the essence of "wise use." In the ongoing struggle over economic competitiveness, "wise use" advocates even recast environmental resistance as a destabilizing form of civil disobedience, which endangers national security, ex- presses unpatriotic sentiments, or embodies treasonous acts. Geoeconomics first took hold during the natural resource short- ages of the 1970s. Arguing that "whoever controls world resources controls the world in a way that mere occupation of territory cannot match," Barnet in 1979 asked, first, if natural-resource scarcities were real, and second, if economic control over natural resources was changing the global balance of power.8 After surveying the struggle to manipulate access to geopower assets, like oil, minerals, water, and food resources, he defined this new geoeconomic imperative as na- tion-states struggled to satisfy the rising material expectations of their populations in today's much more interdependent world sys- tem.9 This geoeconomic reading of the earth's political economy constructs the attainment of national economic growth, security, and prosperity as a zero-sum game. Having more material wealth or eco- nomic growth in one place, like the United States, means not seeing it in rival foreign nations. Material scarcity is a continual policy con- straint; hence, all resources, everywhere and at any time, either are or soon will be private property whose productive potential must be fully exploited.¶ Timothy W. Luke 179 Geoeconomics accepts the prevailing form of mass-market con- sumerism as it presently exists, defines its material benefits as the ul- timate public ends that advanced economies ought to seek, and then affirms the imperative for hard discipline in elaborate programs of productivism, only couched now within rhetorics of highly politicized national competition, as the best means for sustaining consumer lifestyles based on the mass market in advanced industrial economies like the United States. Creating economic growth, and producing more of it than other, equally aggressive, developed and developing countries, is the sine qua non of "national security" in the 1990s. As Richard Darman, President Bush's chief of the Office of Manage- ment and Budget, declared after Earth Day in 1990, "Americans did not fight and win the wars of the twentieth twentieth century to make the world safe for green vegetables."